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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Report by the Secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report has been prepared in response to the decision made by the Committee at its twelfth session 1/ that the Secretariat should prepare every year, as a pre-session document, a report on ways and means of improving the Committee's work. The report should contain all the information that the Secretariat believes necessary for the discussion of the item, arising from the Secretariat's experience from the previous year, the comments made by members to the Secretariat, or developments elsewhere in the human rights regime. It should also contain a list of States parties whose reports could be considered at the subsequent session according to geographical representation.

2. Accordingly, the present report contains the required information, as well as information on those matters relating to the work of the Committee that were carried over from the previous session. With a view to consolidating material in a single report, it also contains a draft provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Committee.

II. REVIEW OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

3. Based on the decision taken by the Committee at its twelfth session 2/ to review the rules of procedure adopted at its first session with a view to adjusting them to the current methods of work, the Committee requested the Secretariat at its thirteenth session 3/ to prepare draft revised rules. The proposed changes were presented to the Committee at its fourteenth session (CEDAW/C/1995/6, annex I). At its fourteenth session, the Committee, in view of the time constraints at that session, decided to defer the item to the fifteenth session.

III. REVIEW OF THE NEED FOR SUMMARY RECORDS AND THE FORMAT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/221 B of 23 December 1994 on the pattern of conferences, agreeing on the need for and the desirability of verbatim and summary records for some bodies of a political or legal nature, while affirming the need to review procedures and to streamline, as appropriate, the provision of meeting records, appealed to the treaty bodies authorized to establish their own practice in the matter to review their need for such records.

5. At its fourteenth session, the Committee expressed the view that these matters should be further discussed in the future. Its report stated:

> "The suggestion to discontinue the summaries of the presentation made by the representative of the State party, of the general observations made by the Committee and of all the questions raised and replies given under each article of the Convention, maintaining only extensive concluding comments by the Committee, would require more meetings and working time. In the light of the existing time constraints under which the Committee

operates, the present format of the annual report should be retained. The Committee also decides that the summary records should be retained for the time being." 4/

6. Also at its fourteenth session, the Committee, with respect to the number of reports to be considered at a given session, decided:

"The Committee is fully aware of the backlog of reports to be considered. However, it emphasizes that the quality of the Committee's work should not suffer for the sake of the quantity of reports considered. Because of the Convention's complex nature and the major global changes in the world, more time should in future be dedicated to constructive dialogue with the States parties. It is therefore recommended that, as a target when adequate meeting time is provided, three meetings should be allocated, on average, for the consideration of a State party's report." 5/

7. In view of the fact that the Committee will be considering fewer reports at its fifteenth session, the Secretariat wishes to reiterate its proposal that the Committee, while retaining summary records, should discontinue the summaries of the presentation made by the representative of the State party, of the general observations made by the Committee and of all the questions raised and replies given under each article of the Convention, maintaining only extensive concluding comments by the Committee.

8. The effect of this suggestion, had it been adopted in 1995, would have been to reduce the size of the Committee's report from 160 pages to 87 pages, a reduction of 73 pages. At a standard cost of US$ 800 per translated page, this would have resulted in savings of approximately $58,400 in conference servicing costs. It would also have freed substantive staff from the need to take notes and make them available to assist the Committee in other ways.

9. It should be noted that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is currently the only human rights treaty body which maintains both summary records and an extensive summary of the constructive dialogue in its report.

IV. REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE SIXTEENTH SESSION

10. The list of reports that have been submitted by States parties and are still awaiting consideration by the Committee can be found in annex I. The reports are listed by order of receipt.

V. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SIXTEENTH SESSION

11. A draft provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Committee can be found in annex II.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/48/38), para. 632.

2/ Ibid., para. 633.

3/ Ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/49/38), para. 811.

4/ Ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/50/38), para. 645.

5/ Ibid., para. 640.

ANNEX I

States parties whose reports have been presented but not yet considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

By order of receipt a/

State party	Date due	Date received	Symbol
A. Initial reports			
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1982	27 September 1991 28 July 1994	CEDAW/C/STV/1-3 CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1
Slovenia	5 August 1993	23 November 1993	CEDAW/C/SVN/1
Israel	2 November 1992	12 January 1994	CEDAW/C/ISR/1
Zaire	16 November 1987	1 March 1994	CEDAW/C/ZAR/1
Morocco	21 July 1994	14 September 1994	CEDAW/C/MOR/1
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1990	21 September 1994	CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3
Armenia	13 October 1994	30 November 1994	CEDAW/C/ARM/1
B. Second periodic reports			
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1986	27 September 1991 28 July 1994	CEDAW/C/STV/1-3 CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1
Argentina	14 August 1990	13 February 1992 27 May 1994 19 August 1994	CEDAW/C/ARG/2 CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1 CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2
Dominican Republic	2 October 1987	26 April 1993	CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1989	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Turkey	19 January 1991	7 February 1994	CEDAW/C/TUR/2
Italy	10 July 1990	1 March 1994	CEDAW/C/ITA/2
Bulgaria	10 March 1987	6 September 1994	CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1994	12 December 1994	CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3
Chile	6 January 1995	9 March 1995	CEDAW/C/CHI/2

C. Third periodic reports

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1990	27 September 1991 28 July 1994	CEDAW/C/STV/1-3 CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1
Canada	9 January 1991	9 September 1992	CEDAW/C/CAN/3
Mexico	3 September 1990	1 December 1992	CEDAW/C/MEX/3
Philippines	4 September 1990	20 January 1993	CEDAW/C/PHI/3
Bangladesh	6 December 1993	26 January 1993	CEDAW/C/BDG/3
Dominican Republic	2 October 1991	26 April 1993	CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3
Denmark	21 May 1992	7 May 1993	CEDAW/C/DEN/3
Belarus	3 September 1990	1 July 1993	CEDAW/C/BLR/3
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1993	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Bulgaria	10 March 1991	6 September 1994	CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3
Republic of Korea	26 January 1994	8 September 1994	CEDAW/C/KOR/3
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1998	21 September 1994	CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3
Peru	13 October 1991	25 November 1994	CEDAW/C/PER/3-4
Venezuela	1 June 1992	8 February 1995	CEDAW/C/VEN/3
Australia	27 August 1992	1 March 1995	CEDAW/C/AUL/3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1995	16 August 1995	CEDAW/C/UK/3

D. Fourth periodic reports

Peru	13 October 1995	25 November 1994	CEDAW/C/PER/3-4

Notes

a/ Only reports received prior to 30 September 1995 have been listed.

ANNEX II

Provisional agenda for the sixteenth session of the Committee

1. Opening of the session.

2. Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee.

3. Election of officers.

4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

5. Report of the Chairperson on the activities undertaken during the year.

6. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention.

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

   Reports of States parties to be considered at the sixteenth session

7. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention.

   Documentation

   Note by the Secretary-General on reports provided by specialized agencies

8. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

   Documentation

   Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

9. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session.

10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session.